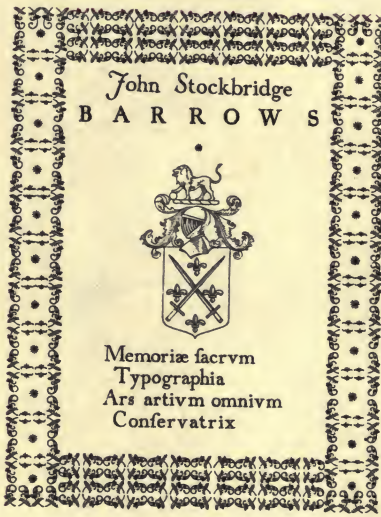

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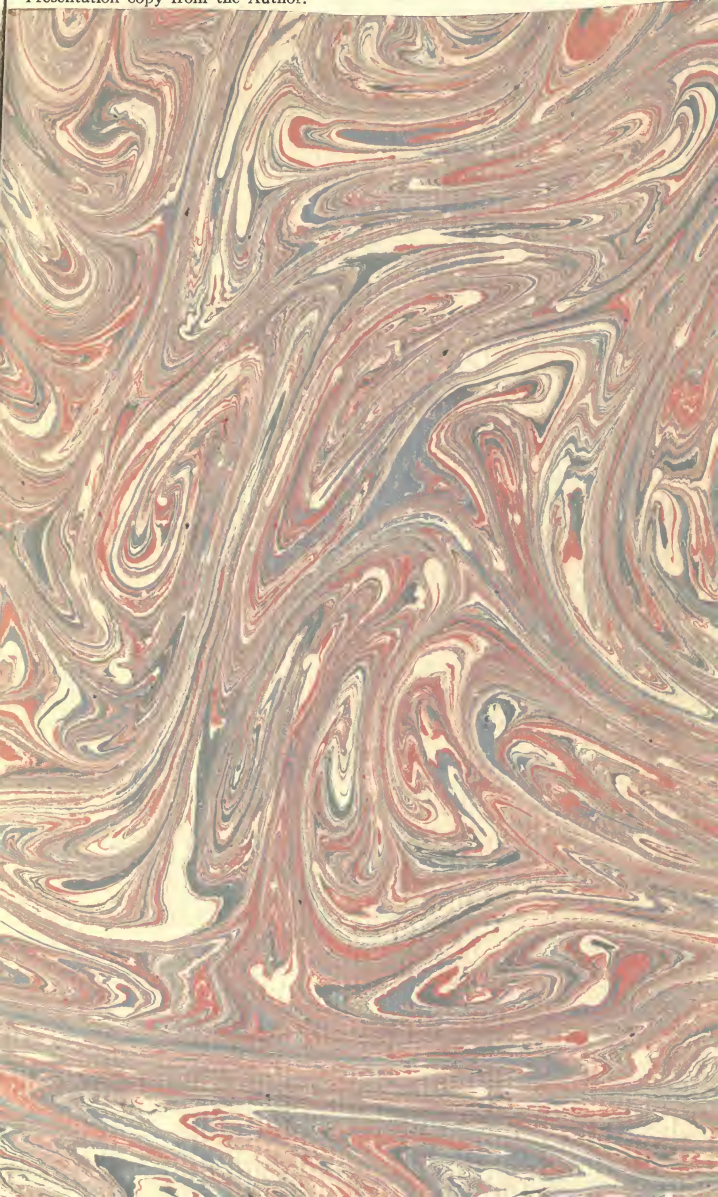

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Earl Grey

With the Author's best

Respects.

THE

Brother in Law.

A COMEDY.

Les vertus se perdent dans l'intérêt, comme les fleuves se perdent dans la mer.

Rochefoucauld.

KENT:
Printed at the private Press of Lee Priory;
BY JOHN WARWICK.
1817.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Play, written more than six years ago, is the production of a Gentleman who is known not only by the graver pursuits in literature to which he has directed his talents, but by the distinguished manner in which he has performed the duties of a sacred profession, since taken upon himself; and who would therefore unwillingly consider this publication as any thing more than a trifle befitting the earlier period of life at which it was composed. But it's elegance, it's simplicity, and the moral cast of sentiment that pervades it, will, I trust, secure for it the interest and praise of the cultivated and intelligent reader, who will not think it an unbecoming prelude to the higher and severer acquirements and tasks to which the author has since aspired.

It is hoped that the Collectors of the Drama, considering that this work comes from a private Press, of which the Copies are very limited, and whence nothing can be reprinted, will deem it a desirable addition to their treasures.

S. E. B.

Jan. 25, 1817.

TO

THE RIGHT HONORABLE

FREDERICK WILLIAM,

EARL OF BRISTOL,

&c. &c. &c.

A NAME

WHICH IS ILLUSTRATED BY SO MANY SPLENDID ACTS OF BENEFICENCE,

This Play

IS INSCRIBED

BY HIS MOST OBEDIENT AND OBLIGED SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

Lee Priory Press.

It is solely for the purpose of shewing that this Press has not been occupied in reprinting mere works of idle curiosity, that the following List is given. The intrinsic merits of Raleigh, Breton, Davison, Drayton, W. Browne, and Wither, as Poets, can only be questioned by stupidity or ignorance. Greene's Tract is very interesting; and Lord Brook's Life of Sydney is of primary value to the Historian and Biographer. Scarce one of these (unless Sydney) was before accessible to any but the rich and fortunate Collector. And, after all, they will not be much longer accessible to future purchasers in their present shape. The Printer has no copies remaining of some of these works: and of the major part of the rest a very small number are in his possession.

The endeavour to give these works literary interest has been the prime object of the Editor. But the beauty of the typography, and of the wood-ornaments will, it is hoped, add greatly to their attraction.

Lee Priory,
Feb. 3, 1817.

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Old Poetry.

1. SIR WALTER RALEIGH'S POEMS. 4to.
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21. SYLVAN WANDERER, (PROSE ESSAYS,) by the same. 2 vols. 8vo.
22. DESULTORIA, by the same. Small 8vo.
23. THE BROTHER IN LAW, A COMEDY. Small 8vo.

Dramatis Personæ.

SIR REGINALD CASTLEWYN.

HONOURABLE GEORGE TRANSIT.

MR. OPTIME.

REV. MR. TEMPLE.

HORACE STRANGE.

EDGAR TEMPLE.

CAPTAIN BELTON.

MR. FLINTLY.

TWIST.

LADY CASTLEWYN.

ELLEN DE RIVERS.

LADY GEORGINA ROSEGROVE.

CLARA OPTIME.

MRS. FLAMINIA OPTIME.

SERVANTS, &c. &c.

SCENE .... *Part of Worcestershire.*

THE

BROTHER IN LAW.

Act the First.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in the Rev. Mr. Temple's Parsonage.

Enter REV. MR. TEMPLE.

TEMPLE. I shall begin to think that the best of all medicines for my weak nerves and body, is an errand of benevolence; since I feel not the least weary with my long walk... The benevolent interest which Lady Georgina takes in the good of these poor cottagers, exhibits traces of a heart the most estimable and amiable. There is indeed something in her whole character which pleases me exceedingly. With the innocent vivacity of a child of Nature, she unites the graces and accomplishments, the dignity and spirit that ought to be the true distinction of a woman of rank.. But who comes hither.... Yes.... It is! [*Enter Horace Strange.*] Welcome, always welcome, Horace, to the Parsonage.

HORACE. My dear Sir, I rejoice to see you.. And how are you, and all my old acquaintance? Is Optime as stout and hale as ever?

TEMPLE. Yes.. he enjoys his usual health and spirits, and continues as fond of his house, grounds, and garden, as....

HORACE. His sister is of old times, old fashions, and old manners.

TEMPLE. Why, I believe that in general, our prepossessions and our prejudices are not found to become weaker as we advance further into the vale of years.

HORACE. And does your other neighbour, Sir Reginald Castlewyn, still make use of his universal charity for a cloak, I am afraid, to his insensibility?

TEMPLE. Horace.. this is to rail.. not to speak the truth.

HORACE. Well, perhaps it is... But I have no patience with those whining sentimentalists who can mourn over an earthquake in China, or a massacre at Otaheite, and yet let all considerations of kindred, friends, and relations, drop from their minds, as things in which they have no concern.

TEMPLE. Surely you don't mean to insinuate that Sir Reginald is this sort of character.

HORACE. Not exactly so; for it is as difficult, in my opinion, to give a clear and certain notion of his character, as to define the figure of the fleeting air.

TEMPLE. Come, come, I must have you think better of Sir Reginald, than I perceive you are dis-

posed to do. For though he does not, like Lady Georgina Rosegrove, make me the almoner of his charities, yet, woe be to us, if we were from that to pronounce him insensible to the finest of human affections.

HORACE. Such a verdict, I grant, would be an unjust one . . But, speaking of Lady Georgina Rosegrove, allow me to ask how long she has been at the Abbey.

TEMPLE. What, then, you are acquainted with her. . . . . Ah, Horace, if the fashionable world were composed of such beings as yourself and her, we should have no pretence to declaim in our pulpits against the vices and follies of the great.

HORACE. Surely, you do not think that all vices, any more than all virtues, centre in the great. There are those I know, who make such a disadvantageous portraiture of them, that nothing pleasing or handsome, no lines of rectitude or candour appear. But you will not conclude, because they make little approach in their lives to those of angels, they therefore make an approach to those of demons?

TEMPLE. No . . far be such a conclusion. . . . . But tell me, can you see and converse with Lady Georgina, and still wish to remain a bachelor?

HORACE. She is a jewel, I confess, that would tempt a man to become a thief. Yet what chance

can I have of gaining the affections of a Lady, who has, I dare say, as many dependents on her favour, as a Prime Minister.

TEMPLE. Well, for my part, from what I have seen of her, I can't help having a sort of presentiment, that she entertains a much higher opinion of your merits, than you yourself have of them.

HORACE. Would you were a true prophet? For know, as it is in some countries the practice for the confessor to be the match-maker, that among the principal inducements for paying my long promised visit at this time, was the hope of meeting with her Ladyship at the Abbey. A few weeks in the country would help me better to discover her real character, than a whole winter in London, as, there, every one may be said to be in masquerade.

Enter a Servant. [*Gives Mr. Temple a letter.*]

TEMPLE. [*Reads to himself.*] Bid the person wait for an answer. [*Exit servant.*] I'll just step into my library for a few minutes, Horace, and then return to you. [*Exit.*

HORACE. My friend, I perceive, still carries with him that heart-touching look of patience, which bends in mute submission to the will of heaven; yet with it, that fixed air of sadness which a severe struggle with unhappiness, seldom fails to rivet on

the human countenance.. Well he may... His are no ordinary sorrows.. How I long, yet scarcely know how, to open to him the tidings I have received about his son... Let me consider.... [*Sits down.*

Enter MR. TEMPLE *unperceived.*

TEMPLE. What musing, Horace, on our late discourse?

HORACE. No, Sir.. my thoughts had taken another, but a very natural, turn. I never think of Matrimony, but the wretched situation of your lovely ward is before my eyes. Does she still continue in her harmless distemper?

TEMPLE. There, you have struck a chord, that vibrates to the inmost core of my bosom. Alas! she eats and sleeps of late, less than ever; and whatever she utters, is connected with the name of my poor Edgar. Whole days, however, she does not exchange a syllable with her sister, but sighs and moans, as if inward grief would choke up her vital spirits. Oh, could I have seen her the wife of my Edgar, I had then been happy as mortal could have been.. Now there is nothing left for me but resignation. Where can I seek or find consolation for the loss of an only son, and such a son as my Edgar was, but in the hope of meeting him in that final state, where tears and sorrows shall be no more.

HORACE. You will recollect, my dear Sir, that Edgar's death was never officially confirmed from India. Who can say then, that a father's prayers for his life have been unheard.

TEMPLE. Could I believe that a doubt still existed of his being dead, how soon would despair give place to hope.

HORACE. [*Aside.*] Now I think is the time. [*Turning to Temple.*]..Mine, I trust, is an active, and not a verbal friendship... On the arrival of the East India fleet in the river, I boarded every ship in the expectation of finding some person who had escaped, or been liberated from the fortress of Ally Ghur..the place you know most likely for your son's confinement, as near to it the action was fought, in which he was returned among the missing.

TEMPLE. Pray proceed.

HORACE. At length, I met with one, who had been a prisoner there so late as nine months ago... I described to him your son's person, and added that his name was Temple... He instantly recollected, that there had been a young man in the same prison with himself, exactly answering to my description, who had escaped some time before his own release, and that his name was....

TEMPLE. What?

HORACE. Edgar.....

TEMPLE. Ruler of Heaven and Earth, can this be true?..May I hope once more to embrace my child!..[*Clasping Horace's hands with affectionate warmth.*]..You are a most kind friend..But I will not thank you..for to a heart constituted as your's is, to have been thus employed, is itself a happiness.

HORACE. A happiness indeed..

TEMPLE. The natural bias of the mind, in affliction's school, is to look only to the worst: and I have been so long trained in it, that this unexpected news seems too much for me...Give me your arm.

[*Exeunt. Temple leaning on the arm of Horace.*

SCENE II.

A dressing room in Mr. Optime's house. The Hon. George Transit at a table, with a book in his hand, and his servant Twist adjusting his hair.

TRANSIT. So Lady Georgina arrived last week.

TWIST. Yes, Sir.

TRANSIT. Well, Twist, as thou art the manuscript of my secrets, learn, that I have come down to the Abbey to woo, win, and wed her fascinating Ladyship. It will be plaguy hard, if I don't succeed in this affair, for if I don't strike her as a man

of fashion, of which there is little doubt, she surely can't withstand me as an Author, especially after my discovery about ears.

TWIST. [*Aside.*] It should have been tongue for a woman.

TRANSIT. Women, however, are but a sort of errata with us authors. I must therefore understand her Ladyship's temper thoroughly, lest I should make shipwreck of my literary reputation upon the rock of matrimony.

TWIST. [*Aside.*] Which may be put into a nut-shell... Aye Sir, it will be a joyful day to me, when you exchange the name of author for that of husband.

TRANSIT. [*Rising from his chair in a great passion.*] Why you drivelling dolt, you scum of ignorance, you lumber of a man of letters, do you dare to insinuate I have employed my pen to no purpose? Don't you know, that for all the good things, the superlatively good things I enjoy, I'm chiefly indebted to my pen? It is that alone, you blockhead, which makes me so much noticed and caressed in every house I enter.. Before I was noted in catalogues, as an author, the Honorable George Transit was as much overlooked as if he had been only the sign of a man.. But the moment my propitious stars inspired me with the idea of writing a book, the case

was altered;.. now, if I'm dull, I'm only said to be thoughtful, and what was before called folly in me, is styled literary eccentricity. If you regard your Master then, you dog, as you profess to do, you will celebrate the day he turned author as the happiest event of his life.

TWIST. I'm sure Sir, I was only going to say....

TRANSIT. Let me have no more of your sayings.. And do you hear, make the best of your way to Worcester. See, if my fame as an author, has spread into this County... Tell the booksellers, I'm the town-talk.. I must be stared at by all the visitable people here, and have my name buzzed about, or else I shall appear in my mistress's eyes, as a fellow who walks like a shadow, and leaves no print of him behind.

TWIST. And yet, Sir, you have a deal of honorable blood in your veins.

TRANSIT. Honorable blood.. i' faith.. Yes, I have blood.

TWIST. Certainly, Sir.

TRANSIT. Blood may be well enough to keep such stupid beings as Mr. Optime and his Sister agape, but I prefer living merits to the renown of ancestry. My book is above all pedigree.. Begone then to Worcester.

TWIST. You may depend upon it, Sir, I'll make you known there.

TRANSIT. Well, I must confess, your exertions might prove highly serviceable to an author whose works began to lie heavy on the shelves of his bookseller.

TWIST. True, Sir.. Take the following instance as a specimen of my address.. You remember Sir, having promised me twenty pounds, if your book came to a second edition before we left town.

TRANSIT. And did I not keep my promise?

TWIST. Certainly, Sir.

TRANSIT. What does the fellow mean then?

TWIST. I only mean to tell you Sir, by what contrivance of mine it came to a second edition.

TRANSIT. Your contrivance.

TWIST. Yes, Sir, by my contrivance.

TRANSIT. Oh, pray let's have it.

TWIST. Why, Sir, the morning you made that promise, I called on two acquaintances, sharp fellows like myself, and before eight in the evening, we had visited separately every booksellers shop of respectability in the town.. In I went, turned over the catalogues, looked at the title pages, admired the bindings, then asked for your book.. Not got it Sir.. You surprise me.. I want six copies of it.. get it me to-morrow.. or I'll leave your shop.. for

the next shop, Sir, I meant to visit... The very next day after this circuit, I recollect your publisher made you a handsome offer for the second edition... Thus, Sir, I humbly conceive that though I can't write books, yet I have as ingenious an invention for disposing of them, as any hoaxer in the town.

TRANSIT. [*Aside.*] A pleasant discovery this.. So then it is owing to this expedient, that I see my book stuck up almost in every shop between Temple-bar and Piccadilly.

TWIST. [*Aside.*] Where, I'll be bound it remains, till it finds it's way to the pastry-cook or trunk-maker.

A knock without.

TRANSIT. See who's there.

TWIST. [*Returning.*] Mr. Optime, Sir.

TRANSIT. Then do you begone. [*Exit Twist.*

Enter MR. OPTIME.

OPTIME. Ah, my dear George, how is it with you. I'm vastly glad to see you once more among us. 'Tis an age since you have paid us a visit.

TRANSIT. I'm happy to perceive, Sir, by your looks, that all enquiries after your health are superfluous... I hope too that Mrs. Flaminia, and Miss Optime, are both well.

OPTIME. How should they be otherwise, when Hygeia has here fixed her favourite seat.

TRANSIT. [*Aside.*] So, my old guardian has got upon his hobby horse already. But I'll let him ride it, as a good word from him may be of service to me with Lady Georgina. [*Turning to Optime.*] Very true, this is the spot to enjoy good health.. Here I shall take no other physic than wholesome walks.. Here too I shall find harmless plenty, instead of guilty luxury.

OPTIME. Why, foreigners may talk as much as they like about Tuscan or Turin veal, the hams of Mentz and Bayonne, the red-leg partridges of the Genoa hills, and the fat liver of a Venetian goose, but I think we can match these rare delicacies at the Abbey. Hey, George, can't we?

TRANSIT. Certainly, Sir. But every thing about your estate shews excellence and taste. The very water seems as clear and wholesome, as if it darted from the breasts of a marble nymph, or the urn of a river God.

OPTIME. Yes, George, all that you see here of design, art, or taste, is the work of the owner himself. Your travelled gentlemen, forsooth, are for crying up the gardens of France and Italy. But do you ever see there such openings, such transitions, as in the grounds of the Abbey. No.. all is stiff

and unnatural. In France, for instance, a garden is disposed like the human body; alleys, like legs and arms, answering each other, and the great walk in the middle represents the trunk. Now in my gardens, nature reigns in a kind of wild simplicity.. zig-zag walks, picturesque lanes, rough rocks, alpine bridges, dark caverns, trees ill-formed, and seemingly rent by tempests, or blasted by lightning.. Hey George? But to change the subject, for you know I'm always shy of speaking about these things, is it true that you are the humble slave of our fair relative and visitor Lady Georgina Rosegrove.

TRANSIT. General report says so, and general report does not lie in this instance.

OPTIME. Well, my boy, if you hope to become a thriving wooer, you must think of studying the Belle, instead of the belles lettres. Do you take me, George?

TRANSIT. Perfectly... We flatter ourselves, however, that our person is as interesting in the drawing room, as our writings have rendered us in the library. Besides, there is a certain goddess called Confidence, who carries a main stroke in a gentleman's preferment. Now this aforesaid Divinity, at whose beck Cupid is, and upon whom Fortune waits, is not apt to desert me, when most I stand in need of her.

OPTIME. [*Aside.*] So, I perceive my friend

George and Modesty are still utter strangers to each other... Well, you have my best wishes for your success.. But, apropos, talking of success, are you and the town of the same opinion with respect to the merits of your book on Ears... By the bye, this system of telling what people are by the form of their ears would be mighty convenient, if it could be always depended on;.. where did you pick it up, or is it all your own fertile invention, as every thing about the Abbey is mine.

Transit. Why, Sir, I'll let you into my secret, as I see clearly from the shape of your ears, you'll not reveal it. You are to know then, in my last trip to Paris, I had the great good fortune to meet with a Jesuit there who had been four years among the Hurons, a most sagacious race of demi-savages in North America. From him I learnt, that all their chiefs were elected by the shape of their ears; I therefore got this learned man to shew me drawings, taken on the spot, of these ears under their various forms, and by comparing them with those of my acquaintances, whose dispositions and characters I previously had studied, I thus learnt to build a system, which, I have no doubt, when it comes to be well understood, will completely supersede that of Lavater, so that, instead of having to look at people's faces to discover their minds, a peep at the

ears will at once do the business... That my book is already thought to discover great marks of original genius is best proved from it's being in a second edition.

Optime. Come, I'm glad to hear of this, as my Review says....

Transit. Why, my dear Sir, I hope you don't attend to what a Review says....

Optime. My Review says.. some books are to be swallowed, others digested, and some only to be tasted, but that yours was so....

Transit. [*Aside.*] A pest on your memory... I understand you, it was sheer nonsense.. trite declamation.. sand without lime.. and so forth...

Optime. But George, by your looks, one would think that you feared these Reviews as much as guilty persons do a magistrate.

Transit. [*Aside.*] Confound your simile... Upon honor, Sir, you were never more mistaken in your life.. I fear a Review.. Ha, ha, ha.. I beg your pardon for laughing, but really the, the, the.. [*Aside*] Would the fellow had never existed who first invented a Review.

Optime. Well, perhaps I may be wrong, not understanding much of these things; but if I were a moneyed author like yourself, I should see if my money could not buy me some praise; for though

you may have arrived at that happy pitch of philosophy, as to care not a bulrush for their abuse, yet as the Reviewers do somehow manage to guide the taste of the town....

TRANSIT. Because so few people will be at the trouble of judging for themselves.

OPTIME. A bribe well employed..You take me.

TRANSIT. Yes..But they won't take me, or else I should have bought their impartiality. [*Aside.*]

Enter a Servant.

SERVANT. [*Speaking to Transit.*] Sir, my mistress bids me tell you, she will be happy to receive you in the drawing-room.

TRANSIT. Say, I'll wait upon her. [*Exit servant.*

OPTIME. And quickly too, George, after this summons. For my good old Sister, whom I don't like the less for being something primeval, is as great a stickler about forms, as if she walked the circle as Empress of Russia. No one understands better than she, when the nod, the half-smile, the whole smile should be given. Fly then, to make your appearance before the *presence*, or else you may happen to get nothing more than the positive nod.

[*Exit.*

TRANSIT. And a precious appearance I should make, if your fine Ladies ever looked into these detestable Reviews. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

An apartment in Mr. Optime's house.

Enter MRS. FLAMINIA OPTIME *and* CLARA OPTIME.

MRS. F. OPTIME. All this, Miss Optime, proceeds from not being educated under my eye. Had that been the case, I should have made you sensible of the folly of imbibing these hasty prejudices.

CLARA. But I have a reason, Aunt.

MRS. F. OPTIME. Yes, and so has the man who robs a church a reason for what he does. But pray let's hear this reason.

CLARA. Why then, Madam, I have grounds for believing that Mr. Flintly is one of those men, to whom religion, honor, conscience are but words, and no more.

MRS. F. OPTIME. Fie, fie, Miss Optime.. I know Mr. Flintly, esteem him, and will do him justice. Can you seriously believe, that if he were the character you represent him, either your Father or I should receive such a visitor? But good simple soul, he never speaks ill of any one.

CLARA. Whom does he speak well of?

MRS. F. OPTIME. I fancy, Miss Optime, I should have none of these sort of insinuations thrown out against my favourite, if you were not in expectation of a certain Captain coming to lay his person and fortune at your feet. But if you are wise, child, you'll give your hand to Mr. Flintly. His heart is an excellent one; and as to manners, look round the world, and tell me where you can find his equal in the refined breeding of old times .. Even though we are on the most intimate footing with each other, he never forgets to address me by the title of *Madam*. Take that now as an instance of the politeness of his style, and of the delicacy of his attentions .... But I see Lady Georgina coming this way; another time I shall renew this subject, when I hope to find you more disposed to listen to my advice. [*Exit.*

Enter LADY GEORGINA ROSEGROVE.

CLARA. Why, my dear Georgina, where have you been rambling all this morning? You seem so fond of the beauties of Nature, that 'tis pity you were ever out of sight of them.

LADY GEORGINA. Oh yes .. the moment I breathe the country air, I feel myself elastic, and ready at sunrise to worship the genius of the hills

and dales. Nature every where presents objects of delight, after a long imprisonment in town. The sweet chirpings of birds in woods and fields, the soft rippling of streams have inexpressible charms; while the rude winds whistle in a tune not unpleasant, and even the dewy earth yields a scent most wholesome and medicinal. But what's the matter.. why do you look so ruffled?

Clara. My aunt has been here, teazing me about that odious wretch Flintly, though the sensitive plant shrinks not more instinctively at the touch than I do at his name. Yet for all I have been telling her he is the greatest of hypocrites, she still persists in importuning me to receive his addresses.

Lady Georgina. Your Aunt is a very kind and a very provident Aunt. She is willing to procure you a husband at any price before she kneels in brass or marble, and you are an ungrateful girl not to acknowledge her kindness.

Clara. Psha.. you are almost as provoking as she is.

Lady Georgina. But is there no other cause for your aversion to this match of your Aunt's?

Clara. Why there is.. You'll laugh though, if I tell you, and then....

Lady Georgina. Come, I'll cut the gordian knot at once.. You are in love with another man.

That's as it should be. Now for the details. I hope the story is a romantic one.. That's the mood I'm in at present.. the last six months, I was in the dissipated. We fine Ladies, my pretty recluse, vary our humours, as often as we do our dresses. But to the story.. This favoured lover you first met....

CLARA. At Malvern Wells.

LADY GEORGINA. Where soon he vowed your lips were coral, your eyes jewels, and your cheeks white and red roses.

CLARA. Something to this purpose, I believe he said.

LADY GEORGINA. And the name of this inamorato is....

CLARA. Captain Belton.

LADY GEORGINA. Why! to the best of my recollection, just such pretty things did this same Captain say to me about a year ago.

CLARA. Lady Georgina!....

LADY GEORGINA. Miss Optime!....

CLARA. You surprise me!

LADY GEORGINA. And you amaze me!

CLARA. Adieu to happiness, if Captain Belton be the man of your choice. None knows so well as your Ladyship how to maintain ascendancy over the heart. Your eyes are well disciplined troops; they know how to attack and to conquer. May I ask

when you are to be united to this false ungrateful man?

LADY GEORGINA. When noblemen and their wives are seen to take the air in the same coaches; when physicians grow religious, and country squires fond of books.

CLARA. And have you been in jest all this while?

LADY GEORGINA. Why, you love-sick simpleton, can't you understand a little innocent raillery?

CLARA. But you know Captain Belton?

LADY GEORGINA. Yes, he was one of my danglers. But I soon struck him off my list. Let me see.. for his dullnes? no, that was not the crime. For his impudence? no, nor for that neither. For his self-conceit? yes, that was the unpardonable offence.

CLARA. Are you in jest now?

LADY GEORGINA. Come, come, don't be alarmed again. Your Aunt will add difficulties enough to your attachment, without my increasing the number of them. In sober seriousness, this said Captain is worth some pains. He is a gentleman by birth, fortune, and education; and should it be no longer fashionable in the next winter for our young men to be coxcombs, your Captain, both in head and heart, will then be a valuable man.

Enter Servant.

SERVANT. Mr. Strange to wait upon you, Madam.

CLARA. Show him into the next room. Now, Lady Georgina, I'll introduce you to one, of whom any woman may be proud to make a conquest. He would be worth a thousand such admirers as your Mr. Transit.

LADY GEORGINA. Not a word will I hear against Transit. For really, my dear, after listening an hour to your father about his house, lawns, streams, statues, and temples, and to your Aunt about German etiquette, and *pommade divine*, I find the conversation of the *literary* Mr. Transit quite refreshing. But of this Mr. Strange, whom you seem to be quite in the vein to eulogize, observe, it will not be the first time of our meeting.

CLARA. Then I am sure you will not think of comparing Mr. Transit to him.

LADY GEORGINA. Why, child, I believe I can contrive to distinguish between gems and pebbles.

[*Exeunt.*

Act the Second.

SCENE I.

A library in Sir Reginald Castlewyn's house; Sir Reginald discovered reading.

Sir Reginald. [*Putting down the book.*] I can read no more; every line is bitter gall to my conscience. How weary am I of this lingering life! Had I lived obscure in humbleness, nay, in poverty, I had been supremely happy, compared with what I now am . . Oh Ellen, whose form haunts me by day and by night, gladly would I now surrender up my whole fortune to see thee once more restored to thy senses .... Alas! . . thy disease is beyond hope, beyond cure. . . Damned thirst of wealth! that dried up the soft springs of pity in my heart, and taught my tongue to frame the execrable lie which drove thee into madness. . . Well may she loathe my presence, and start and tremble at my name. . . But justly has offended Heaven visited that act of mine. To have heirs to my large estate was my daily prayer. . . They came, and when I began to see my face in their opening looks, and to hear the first accents of their lisping tongues, they one by one were snatched from me. My wife, my beloved wife too must soon sink under this accumulated weight of wretchedness . . Curst be the hour I was born. . . Here comes one, however,

with a heart that cannot feel, a face that cannot blush.

Enter MR. FLINTLY.

FLINTLY. So early at your books, Sir Reginald?

SIR REGINALD. They are my best companions, except when I'm favoured by a visit from a friend like you. Any news this morning?

FLINTLY. Yes, I have news that would try the patience of a Stoic.

SIR REGINALD. [*Looks alarmed.*] What is it, pray?

FLINTLY. Why, after having ingratiated myself with Optime by the most lavish praises of every thing animate and inanimate about his estate, and gained his Sister by humouring all her ridiculous antiquated absurdities, I'm in a fair way of losing Her for whose sake I have willingly let these old people rob me of my time and temper.

SIR REGINALD. How so?

FLINTLY. By the hourly expected arrival of Captain Belton.

SIR REGINALD. But if the affections of Miss Optime be your's, I can't see why the visit of that gentleman should be a matter of this disturbance to you.

FLINTLY. Nor would it, were I secure of her

affections. It however so happens, that this Captain Belton was a great favourite with Clara, when they met at Malvern last summer; and Optime, I understand, has given him an invitation to pass the race week at his house. Confound the young fellow for thus darkening the bright prospect in view. My way before was smooth and easy.. now it will require the most wary walking.. unless by our manœuvres....

SIR REGINALD. Our manœuvres, Mr. Flintly!

FLINTLY. 'Twas my word, Sir Reginald.

SIR REGINALD. I trust my friend believes I exceedingly regret this appearance of a Rival, but.. but:...

FLINTLY. Look ye, Sir Reginald, I want something more from you than that poor comfort of disappointment, pity. I must have your aid, your....

SIR REGINALD. Then let me tell you, Mr. Flintly, you presume too much on my friendship, if you suppose that I will be an agent in any of your clandestine schemes against Miss Optime.

FLINTLY. What miracle may we next expect, when Sir Reginald Castlewyn turns scrupulous! I should have thought, when he got me to suppress certain letters of Edgar to his father and Ellen, and to do my utmost to blast the young man's fair fame for ever, he had from that time laid aside the rags

of conscience fit only to keep such Churchmen warm as old Temple.

Sir Reginald. You are pleasant Sir: pray proceed... [*Aside*] Down, down the swellings of my tortured heart.

Flintly. I am scarcely able to comply with your request; so amazed do I feel, that he, whose conscious thoughts must be so full of guilt as to shake with horror to have them sifted, should now pretend to have his sharp compunctions, and to raise a bugbear shadow of difficulty where there should be no difficulty.. [*Advancing to Sir Reginald with a taunting air.*] Because you are not exposed, do you therefore think yourself secure? [*Speaking again in an impressive voice.*] Who was it, Sir Reginald, drove Ellen De Rivers mad, by telling her, without the smallest preparation, and at a moment when she expected to have heard of his return, that her Edgar was dead?.. Who was it, I say, bribed me to conceal....

Sir Reginald. Peace, peace.. your words are daggers to me. Oh bring to my mind no recollection of the past, lest I should....

Flintly. Hush.. some one approaches.

Sir Reginald. 'Tis my wife.. Forget what I have just now uttered, and command my services.. But now I beg you to withdraw.

FLINTLY. I know no pleasure so great, as that of obliging my dear friend, Sir Reginald Castlewyn.

[*Exit.*

Enter LADY CASTLEWYN.

SIR REGINALD. Well, my love, what kind of night has our poor Ellen passed?

LADY CASTLEWYN. It will be long before I bring you good tidings from that quarter. She spent the night in melancholy musings. Still over past scenes her memory delights to brood, and time but makes the impression stronger. I'll spare your feeling heart further particulars, as none can more deeply compassionate her state than yourself. For often in your sleep you talk most wildly about her and the lost Edgar, and sometimes, strange to add, in such bitter accents as if you were in dreadful enmity against them.

SIR REGINALD. Indeed! Wake me for the future I intreat you, when you find me thus disturbed.

LADY CASTLEWYN. I will. But cannot this fine morning tempt you abroad? I am sure it will be of service to your health.

SIR REGINALD. Perhaps it may.. my spirits have been much depressed this morning.

LADY CASTLEWYN. I have generally observed after the visits of Mr. Flintly, a deeper melancholy

than usual seizes you. But he is your friend, and that endows him in my eyes with every good.

SIR REGINALD. [*Aside.*] Oh, insupportable!

LADY CASTLEWYN. I must leave you now for the present, as this is the time for my again visiting the poor sufferer: when that sad duty is performed, I'll follow you to the terrace.

[*Exit. Lady Castlewyn.*

SIR REGINALD. If she had remained a moment longer, I must have betrayed myself. And then, when she saw my acts, naked as they must one day be seen, how justly would the name of best be changed into the worst of mankind! Surely, if I had not found such an instrument of villany in Flintly, I could not have plunged myself in such utter misery, merely to die overwhelmed with riches.. I once had humanity, and was pleased to tread in the paths of virtue... Oh love of gold! thou fiend that I have made the god of my idolatry, how fatally have I been deceived when I thought that he who was possessed of thee could command honor, respect, nay, happiness itself! [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

An apartment in Sir Reginald Castlewyn's house, a door at the bottom of the room, leading to a garden. . . Ellen De Rivers discovered sleeping on a sofa.

Enter LADY CASTLEWYN.

LADY CASTLEWYN. [*Looking pensively at her Sister.*] How calm she now appears: her sleep seems like the rest of infants. After this kind of slumber, I have generally the satisfaction of perceiving her mind more tranquil, and her lucid intervals longer than at any other period... Dear suffering girl, hard is thy fate for one so young and good.. She stirs.. Good heaven, what a sudden change of countenance there now is.. [*Taking her hand eagerly.*] Ah, what a pang shot there, which like some hideous dream writhes her to and fro.. She wakes.. [*Ellen rises and looks around her with a disturbed air.*].. How does my beloved Ellen? Why this unusual agitation, this violent grasp? It is your Sister speaks.. Come, a little air may revive you.. Look what a pleasant day it is.

ELLEN. Alas, my sister, what is day to me. Morning follows morning, and year will follow year, if I live so long, quite unheeded, amid this sameness of misery; since hope, who visits every wretch besides, never comes to me.

Lady Castlewyn. Will you hear music? Shall I touch your Harp?

Ellen. No..no..no. The sound of music is now hateful to my ears, unless you can tune the notes in harmony to my soul's sadness..Even your darling children were unwelcome here; though I need not fear their intrusion, for, of late, they have quite shunned me...How long is it, Sister, since I have beheld the pretty prattlers?..This dizziness which attacks my brain makes sad havoc with my memory. Are they all well?

Lady Castlewyn. Yes..well..all very well. [*Aside*] Her words are agony. But why do you thus anxiously examine your dress?..Have you lost any thing of value belonging to it?

Ellen. [*Clasping her hands together, and looking at her Sister with mingled consternation and grief.*] Lost any thing of value, did you say?..Oh yes..I have lost my talisman..the object of my dearest care and love..that from which I vowed with life alone to part. Now it is gone, feel what an icy coldness sits about my heart..it seems as if no heat could thaw it...Sister, methought last night, when drowsiness had locked up every sense, I beheld a form advancing with a look so grim, that had I been a statue of stone, it would have daunted me. Quickly it plucked the treasure from my bosom, and disap-

peared beneath a caverned cliff, where the flapping bat is heard, where creeps the poisonous toad, and where the worm spins it's shroud of death... Come, Sister, let us descend in quest of it.

LADY CASTLEWYN. [*Aside.*] All yesterday she talked in this strain. I'll try to draw her out of it, by speaking of Mr. Temple.

ELLEN. Come, dearest Sister, are you ready to be gone?

LADY CASTLEWYN. No..nor will you, Ellen, when I tell you, that I expect a visit every minute from our old favourite, Mr. Temple.

ELLEN. Temple..the father of my Edgar!.. [*She strikes her forehead with frantic violence.*] Ah.. ah..what shootings do I feel through my brain, and what a mountain's weight presses on my heart.. Oh Sister, if ever you loved me, if ever my life was precious to your sight, if my woes did ever wet your cheeks..give, give me back my Edgar.... Vain request..Would the whirlwinds at this moment bear me through the air, their force were welcome..... Oh Death, thou angel of the wretched, come to my relief. [*Throws herself into Lady Castlewyn's arms.*]

LADY CASTLEWYN. Father of Mercies, look down upon her sufferings..Try to compose yourself, my love.

ELLEN. In vain are all attempts. Ever does my

restless mind bring back the form of Edgar. I am transfused indeed into the object of my love, and my memory is of no further use than to reflect the images of what he said and did... Oh, dear departed shade, I see thee now in fancy's eye, fair as the dawn of light, and mild as the breath of spring. Can I e'er forget too the day when we met to utter that dreadful word, Farewell. Oh, 'twas a day that sent into the heart a secret feeling of our future wretchedness. The stormy wind howled through the plantation as I passed along it to our place of meeting; all green was vanished, save of pine and yew; no bird of night was heard but the moping owl, or mournful rook, and every sound and sight besides presented to the ear and eye nought but of accordant gloominess.

Lady Castlewyn. Would I could soothe the sorrows of thy wretched state.

Ellen. You too, who have your senses free, for mine at times, I fear, sadly wander, can surely well remember that hour, that awful hour, when our Mother, sitting on the bed from which she never rose, called Edgar and me to her, and lifting up her closing eyes to Heaven, joined our hands, and died.. Fit omen this, for loves like our's, that were never to be blest, till we join each other in that place,

where all blessed union is secure... But hark, I hear footsteps.

LADY CASTLEWYN. [*Looking towards the garden.*] 'Tis only Sir Reginald, taking his lonely walk on the terrace. Shall I call him to us?

ELLEN. Oh, no, no. His voice is thunder, his looks are lightning. Let me begone, let me begone. The trembling dove, when she hears the serpent gliding to devour her, is not more scared, than I am at his presence. [*Exit Ellen in haste.*

LADY CASTLEWYN. Had I not been told it was no unusual thing for such as are afflicted with this piteous malady, to express the deepest aversion to those whom they before loved and esteemed the most, I should be led to think there was something strange, even to a fearful mystery, in her terror, whenever she sees, hears, or speaks of my dear Sir Reginald. [*Exit.*

Act the Third.

SCENE I.

A saloon in Mr. Optime's house.

Enter TRANSIT.

TRANSIT. Wit, like friendship, I find, is most out of the way when one has the greatest need of it.. Here now have I been as dumb during the whole of dinner as Westminster Hall in the long vacation; while that fellow Strange was solely engrossing the attention of Lady Georgina. To have heard how confidently he talked, any one would have imagined that he, and not I, was the author. His language to be sure now and then strongly relished of the Critic, and there is something very suspicious in the name of Horace. If I could only get a good view of the tip of his ear, I should know at once what conclusions to make..... Lavater! how imperfect is his boasted system to mine!.. The faculties of the mind any fool could discern from the features of the visage, but it was for me alone to catch them in the ear. Well indeed may the beaver, the fox, and the race-horse be proverbial for sagacity, for, in truth, their ears but little exceed mine in size. Here comes the gentleman, and, by all that's vexatious, Lady Georgina with him.

Enter HORACE, LADY GEORGINA, *and* CLARA.

LADY GEORGINA. And so the poor Lady ever after that chanted her own encomiums.

HORACE. Invariably.

LADY GEORGINA. She did perfectly right. Don't you think, Mr. Transit, that, when fame has lost her voice, we ought to be our own trumpets?

TRANSIT. Certainly, for if we don't then sing a panegyric upon ourselves, who else will?

HORACE. To be sure the affectation of modesty is the greatest impudence, but poor must be the merits of him who is obliged to be the herald of his own praises.

TRANSIT. [*Aside.*] Confound the fellow, does he mean that as a hit at me!

LADY GEORGINA. Well, but let me ask, who does not like flattery?

HORACE. Dear Lady Georgina, pardon me if I speak a little freely; but I own that, of all the ill weeds which the teeming soil of fashion shoots up, none is so nauseous to me as flattery.

LADY GEORGINA. But surely there is some good in flattery. This, for instance, that, by hearing what we are not, we are instructed what we ought to be.

CLARA. Are the men then all hypocrites, when they praise our charms.

Lady Georgina. Yes, my dear, they are all hypocrites when they have to do with our sex. When they use the word Angel to us, they mean only ten thousand pounds, and Goddess in their language is an hundred thousand.

Transit. Fy, fy, Lady Georgina, to traduce us in this manner: when you know that we men, authors in particular, never think we can speak or write properly of your sex, unless we are like the pilgrim's dog in the fable, from whose paw, whenever he shook it, out flew a pearl.

Horace. Your Ladyship's satire, I must say, is somewhat severe, though I can't help allowing there is a monstrous abuse of words in our compliments. Vassal and slave, the humblest tenders of life and soul, no professions short of devotion and admiration, are changes for ever ringing in the ears of the Ladies; so that, when we really wish to convince them of our esteem and love, we must either want proper words to express them, or explore new regions of nonsense in search of those terms which shall beyond all dispute entitle us to merit of originality in folly.

Lady Georgina. I admit this, but sincerity, I am afraid, you would find a very dangerous virtue on these occasions.

Horace. 'Tis pity, however, it is not more in

vogue, since the practical effect of it would be to prevent many persons from exposing themselves to public ridicule. For instance, I dare say the writer of the anonymous book you had in your hand before dinner thinks his performance to be of the first-rate merit, when . . . .

TRANSIT. Well Sir, and can you be of a different opinion!

HORACE. Indeed I can. Wit and wisdom were formerly synonimous terms in English, but I think this Author has clearly proved that they signify quite opposite things; and that to be witty now, we are to be ridiculous.

TRANSIT. [*Aside.*] Ears forsooth . . The Pig . . [*Lifting up his hands to his head.*] What danglers! . . those monstrous cartilages hang only from an addle-pate. [*Looking at Horace.*

LADY GEORGINA. [*Aside.*] Now am I ill-natured enough to wish to see Transit's vanity a little more mortified. Sure Horace must know whose book he is speaking of.

TRANSIT. Well to be sure there is this advantage in plain speaking, that it gives me the liberty of telling you without offence, that I think that smart speech of yours very dull indeed. But have you any thing more to say against the book of my friend?

HORACE. Your friend!

TRANSIT. Yes. The author is a gentleman for whom I entertain a most particular regard.

HORACE. That declaration has closed my lips: else I should have said....

TRANSIT. [*Interrupting.*] Oh, I beg to know what you would have said.

HORACE. Nay, if you are so desirous to know, I'm no longer tongue-tied.. In one point of view then, I must confess the Author is likely to be serviceable to himself.

TRANSIT. Oh, now you mean to flatter.

HORACE. No, upon my word I don't; for he need never be at the trouble of opening his mouth again to let the world know what he is, as the length of his own ears, will make him sufficiently notorious ..[*Aside*] for an ass. [*Turning to Transit.*] Though I could advise him....

TRANSIT. What?

HORACE. To write a libel, and then perhaps he may have a chance of getting them cropped, in such a way as to give them the appearance of belonging to a man of reasonable understanding.

TRANSIT. [*Aside.*] By all that's tormenting, a Critic: and, from the tip of his ear being so much disengaged, it is even betting that he belongs to the infernal northern fraternity. [*Walking up and down the room in a great heat.*]

Enter OPTIME.

OPTIME. Oh, Clara, your Aunt has been enquiring for you. Go to her, my dear. [*Exit Clara.*] Hark ye, Horace, how came you to be so queer to Sir Reginald? Your speeches made him sit quite uneasy in his chair.. He has a delicate sense of reputation, and touching it is like pricking a nerve, quickly felt and painfully irritative.

HORACE. 'Tis perhaps the fault of education, or of my nature, or my nurse, who was a Welchwoman, that whatever I think, I utter.

TRANSIT. [*Aside.*] Plague on your plain speakers.

HORACE. But the sight of Sir Reginald reminded me of One, who, I must believe, has been the victim of his duplicity. You knew, Sir, the high sense of honor in Edgar Temple, and the peculiar nature of his attachment to Miss De Rivers?

OPTIME. Yes, yes, I know that from children they were fond of each other; and that this instinct of infancy became a sentiment between them, as their reason ripened.

HORACE. But did you know who drove him from that form of which in his eyes there was not the equal?

OPTIME. No, nor can I guess.

HORACE. Why, this Sir Reginald... Too nicely

scrupulous, Mr. Temple insisted upon his son's absenting himself from Miss De Rivers, until she came of age, and, for that purpose, sought to procure him an ensigncy. Apprized of this intention, Sir Reginald obtained Edgar a commission in a corps, which he had been privately informed was under immediate orders for India: and thus his cruel kindness produced all the effect it was designed to have.. the separation of the lovers.

Optime. Old Temple was wrong, under such circumstances, to let his son go abroad.

Lady Georgina. Unhappy Ellen!

Horace. Could my respected friend have anticipated the lamentable result of that separation, there exists not the power which could have extorted his consent to it.

Lady Georgina. Is it true no letter has been received by Mr. Temple from his son since his arrival in India?

Horace. As true, but from what cause time alone must discover, as that he has been equally silent to Miss De Rivers and myself.

Optime. If Sir Reginald has thus conducted himself, ecod, Strange, I'm not sorry you did hit him so hard... It does not surprise me now, that he had no relish for my turtle, venison, and delicious ruffs and rees.

HORACE. There is no accounting, Mr. Optime, for the taste of our ancestors in these things; now, no one who has the *savoir vivre* ever thinks of regaling his guests first with oysters and brawn, if he means afterwards to give them turtle, venison, and delicious ruffs and rees.

OPTIME. [*Aside.*] Well, this free speaking may be very fashionable, but it is vastly impertinent.

Enter CLARA OPTIME.

CLARA. Here's etiquette!.. here attention to good breeding! My Aunt has been waiting for your Ladyship and the rest of you for this half hour in the music room.. Well! and why don't you obey her summons?

OPTIME. It should seem, my dear, from what I have just heard, we are such novices in the fashionable world, that, for aught we can tell, it may be quite genteel to keep your Aunt still waiting.. Hey, Mr. Strange?

HORACE. That you are there too in error, Sir, I'll convince you immediately..... Miss Optime, may I beg the honor of your hand. [*Exeunt.*

TRANSIT. [*To Lady Georgina.*] Allow me the same happiness.

LADY GEORGINA. On condition you promise to

be as good company as you were before Mr. Strange abused your book.

TRANSIT. Sheer envy, believe me; the poor in merit always seek to depreciate that excellence which they can't surpass. Otherwise, you would hear such lines as these applied to so unique a performance:

Errors like straws upon the surface flow,
Those who would seek for gems must dive below.

[*Exeunt.*

OPTIME. When I was a young man, it would have been just as impudent for a visitor to tell his host plump to his face that his dinner did not please him, as to have brought his cook with him to dress it. The puppies of my days used to cringe like setters, but those of the present times are of the species of the lurcher, which catches and snarls whilst feasting. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

An anti-room in Mr. Optime's house.

Enter SIR REGINALD *and* FLINTLY.

SIR REGINALD. I tell you, Flintly, happen what may, my soul is bent on knowing before I quit this house, if the affront passed on me by Mr. Strange

was intentional... And see, to my wish, he comes. Do you withdraw, and leave us together.

FLINTLY. Well, for my part, Sir Reginald, I thought you had been wiser than to seek a quarrel with a young fellow, who may perhaps take it into his head that Honor is something more than a phantom to scare fools.

SIR REGINALD. Fear not my caution.

[*Exit Flintly.*

Enter HORACE.

SIR REGINALD. Sir, your most obedient. I began to despair of being honored with this interview.

HORACE. If you have any thing, Sir Reginald, to address to me, pray proceed at once to the subject. Few words are best, in my opinion, with friends, and still fewer with enemies.

SIR REGINALD. To the point then.. What were your views in those particular observations which you made after dinner?

HORACE. Repeat them, and you shall know.

SIR REGINALD. That wealth, where humanity was wanting, appeared in your eyes any thing but a blessing to it's possessor.

HORACE. Do you deny the justice of this sentiment?

Sir Reginald. No, Sir, but why did you directly look towards me when you had uttered it?

Horace. Any thing more, Sir Reginald?

Sir Reginald. Yes, you further observed, when I had said charity was not confined to the slender interests of one person, but extended to the concerns of all men, that no sight was now more common than for the most artful and selfish to assume the garb of philanthropy; and then, Sir, your eyes were so pointedly fixed on me, that the whole company saw instantly at whom this speech was levelled. Now what is your explanation of this insult?

Horace. This, and this only: that I know a villain when I see him do the deeds of a villain.

Sir Reginald. A villain.... [*Aside*] Oh guilt, guilt! to what art thou subject! Sir, this is not the proper place to settle this affair.. You shall soon hear from me, and depend upon it, you shall find that my resentment is equal to the punishment of your audacity. [*Exit.*

Horace. If my free speech is to bring me into this sort of scrapes, I shall begin to call it, with Lady Georgina, a dangerous virtue. Yet I cannot control it without forfeiting my own esteem; so it must e'en stick to me, with all it's unlucky consequences, until I can learn to think one thing and to utter another; and that is as likely to happen, as

Transit to be the greatest genius of the age... But now to rejoin her Ladyship .. What mind she shews in every look! Happy, transcendantly happy will he be whose fate is linked with her's. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

Pleasure-ground adjoining Mr. Optime's house.

Enter CAPTAIN BELTON.

CAPT. BELTON. So, at last I have been able to make my retreat .. The company are now all engaged one way or another, and Clara has promised to meet me here in a few minutes. What a lovely creature she is, and almost as unconscious of it as the wild rose! She will rank in the first file of the beautiful in London. My fortune will be sufficient for us, and I would rather lose her's, than submit my manly reason to the whims and prejudices of the Father and Aunt .. I must shew therefore beforehand I have a will of my own, to prevent us from quarrelling like contrary elements the rest of our lives, which I should be sorry to do for my dear Clara's sake. But gently, good tongue .. I hear a rustling among the leaves. By all that's vexatious .. the old folks.

Enter Optime *and* Mrs. Flaminia Optime.

Optime. What, Captain, admiring this pretty spot? Come, now tell me, are you not of my opinion, that the country is infinitely preferable to the noise, dust, and smoke of London?

Capt. Belton. Prodigiously sorry to differ from you, my dear Mr. Optime, but, 'pon honor, it would be quite *gothic* to say so of a Capital, where every thing pleases . . of a world where every thing engages, which presents so many seducing objects, so many different pleasures. Egad, Sir, were I to acquiesce in your opinion, I should be as much shunned by my friends at Boodle's, as if I were followed thither by a certain equipage of people called Duns.

Optime. [*Aside.*] Very likely, and the Town and yourself may be exactly suited.

Mrs. F. Optime. For my part, to dwell in a circle of dissipation, intrigues, and impositions of all kinds, to find each step I took impeded by flatterers, knaves, and back-biters, to partake of dinners and suppers without friendship or mirth, and to live with an appearance of being happy, when in reality you are not less weary of these scenes of deception and folly than the most wearied are, would be the greatest of all punishments.

Optime. Right, Sister, in such an assemblage

of empty heads, aching hearts, and false faces, we two should droop like hops without poles. Now, Captain, I'll submit it to your reason.

Capt. Belton. Oh, Sir, it would be a bad world, with most of us, if reason were always to rule.. But to wave the subject.. Pray, Sir, do you know where the young Ladies have strolled? The unhappiness of the *bourgeois* is, he has too much to do, while our misery is, without company we know not what to do. [*Goes to the end of the walk to look for them.*

Optime. [*Apart to his Sister.*] Here is an impudent puppy for you.. complains he wants company, while we are close at his elbow! [*Aside.*] But the fellow can have no brains, or else before this, I should have heard how much he admired my house and gardens.

Mrs. F. Optime. Brother, the impertinence of the young men of the age is quite intolerable. Oh, they are nothing to be compared to those of my days.

Optime. [*Advances to Capt. Belton.*] 'Tis pity, Captain, when you find time to hang thus heavy on your hands, you were not obliged to go through the manual.

Capt. Belton. That would never do, my good Sir, for what's a gentleman but his pleasure?

Optime. If a gentleman be nothing else, he is the most wretched creature in the world. If it be

his privilege to do nothing, it is his privilege to be without worth or use, and then he can have no title to real happiness.

Capt. Belton. True, Sir, very true. [*Aside.*] Where can his charming daughter be all this while? I must contrive to get away.... I think, Mr.Optime, you talked at dinner about some particularly large carp you had. As I passed here, I saw a pond full of them. I'll just step to it, and return to you presently.

Optime. Hey.. what, you are curious that way? Come then, I'll point you out some in a stew just by, which are the finest that can be seen.

Mrs. F. Optime. Nonsense, brother, to talk of their being the finest which can be seen. Was not there a carp sent from Strasburg to Rheims on the coronation of a Bourbon, which weighed fifty pounds! and fish of thirty pounds are as common at the tables of the great at Vienna, as those of three at ours.

Capt. Belton. Oh, don't mention Vienna, if you love me.

Mrs. F. Optime. And why not, Sir?

Capt. Belton. Because it is the most dull of all dull cities. Both sexes there are the idolatrous lovers of ancient usages, and the decided foes of all novelties. Beings, I do assure you, Mr. Optime, of an-

other age, who follow for their ton, an old etiquette . . for their law, an old taste.

MRS. F. OPTIME. [*Aside.*] The empty fop!

OPTIME. Ridiculous indeed . . But come along with me, and I'll shew you some lampreys, which my sister herself shall allow are not to be matched at Vienna. [*Exit Mr. Optime, leading off his Sister.*

CAPT. BELTON. Confound all fish-ponds, say I. [*Exit.*

Enter MR. FLINTLY.

FLINTLY. So, there they go, and from their seeming to be so gracious together, I am afraid the Captain has not yet shewed his town-conceit. If I can only hit upon some plan to make him display it before the old man in it's full colours, I ensure his dismissal at once. Help me, Invention, help me at this critical pinch of my fortune . . . . They come this way.

Re-enter MR. *and* MRS. F. OPTIME *and* CAPT. BELTON.

FLINTLY. I'm afraid I interrupt an agreeable conversation.

MRS. F. OPTIME. Your presence is always welcome, Mr. Flintly.

OPTIME. [*Apart to Mr. Flintly.*] Could not have popped here more luckily.

Flintly. I suppose, Sir, you have been showing Captain Belton your grounds. What do you think of them? [*Aside.*] Now pertness dictate his answer.

Optime. [*To Flintly.*] He does not seem to think much about them. Come, Captain, tell us what you think, in the first place, of the style of the house. You admire that. Hey, don't you?

Capt. Belton. [*Aside.*] My intended father-in-law shall now see how little I'll humour him: though it half pains me to say a rude thing to him. . . [*Turning to Optime.*] *Point du tout.*. In plain English, not at all. I should not however venture to say so, if you were like some men that I have met with, who, enraptured with the mansion of which they are the architects, regulate their regard for you according to the degree of approbation which you bestow on their *petit domaine.*

Optime. No. . with all my foibles, for where is the man without some, I'm quite free from that species of absurdity. I never bore any one about my house, garden, park, and trees; do I, Flintly? Nor if they don't admire every thing they see, set them down as prejudiced, envious, or little better than ideotic, do I, Sister... But can you, Sir, suggest in taste any plan for the improvement of my house!

Capt. Belton. Oh no, it would be useless to adjust or embellish....

Flintly. [*Apart to Mr. Optime.*] He talks something like reason now.

Capt. Belton. What nothing could improve.

[*Retires to the end of the walk.*

Optime. Zounds! Is this said of a house for the sake of which I have sometimes wished myself immortal!.. Why you.. But I'll be calm.. I'll not put myself into a passion.. Really, Flintly, this is quite comical. Now if it were not downright vulgar to laugh, for every body can laugh, I should be ready to expire with laughter at this unexpected piece of drollery.... What nothing could improve.... The common saying is certainly true, that there is no disputing about taste.. And it is possible, possible did I say, it is certain, after what he has said, this fellow would prefer the Saracen's head upon a sign-post to the transfiguration of Raphael. Why, Sister, he must be either blind or mad!

Mrs. F. Optime. Blind he may be, but mad he can't be; for he that is so, has lost his wits, and I am sure the Captain never had any to lose.

Capt. Belton. [*Advancing towards them.*] Yonder, Mr. Optime, I see your fair daughter and Lady Georgina, who, as they are neither nuns nor witches, two beings which are said to delight in solitude,

will, I dare say, have no objection to my joining them. *Au-revoir . . au-revoir.* [*Exit.*

FLINTLY. [*Aside.*] Fortune, I thank thee, for this fittest of all moments to make my proposals. . . [*Turning to Optime.*] I need not now point out to you, Sir, that Captain Belton is not the man to render your daughter happy, though I were her aversion. Allow me then to declare before Mrs. Flaminia Optime, that if you would accept me for a son-in-law, I should never presume to interfere with any of your little peculiarities; and as to your house and gardens, which reflect such lustre on their owner for the unrivalled taste and elegance displayed in them, I promise you, on the honor of a Gentleman, it should be all my care to keep them up exactly in their present state, whenever you repose with your ancestors.

OPTIME. [*Aside.*] Repose with my ancestors . . Vastly genteel and significant . . Now I'll give him a touch of the new school . . for I don't want my friend George's knowledge of ears to determine whether this Gentleman is one of those who are only for letting the lawyer be the priest who marries him. .... Mr. Flintly, I owe you a thousand thanks for your singularly liberal proposal; and though I'm in no ways disposed to put you to the test, yet I don't

doubt in the least that you would be any thing but magnificent in promise, and poor in performance.

Mrs. F. Optime.. Oh, Mr. Flintly, brother, is the very quintessence of honor and liberality.

Flintly. Madam, you flatter me highly.

Optime. [*Aside.*] She does indeed... Well then, Mr. Flintly, as you mean I suppose from all this to request that I should give you a legal claim to an estate of four thousand a year, allow me to ask at once, as plain sense is best understood from being short, what are your pretensions to my daughter's hand?

Flintly. My pretensions.. I confess, Sir, I don't understand you.

Optime. Oh, I perceive you are but a novice in the new school. Come then, I'll put the question to you in the old way.. What is your rent-roll?

Flintly. Rent-roll did you say?

Optime. Yes.. rent-roll. For though you may deem that a secondary consideration, yet it is a primary one with me, when a man attempts to gain the father's consent, before he has the daughter's.

Flintly. My property, Mr. Optime, is in the funds.

Optime. What, no lands, no mansion, no woods, no ponds?

FLINTLY. I expect soon to be in possession of them all.

OPTIME. [*Aside.*] As soon as I repose with my ancestors . . Now for another specimen of the new school, and then to make my bow to this very honorable Gentleman..... My obligations are inexpressible, Mr. Flintly, for your wishing to take my daughter off my hands; but it is one of my little peculiarities to think, that your rapid funded fortunes are not acquired without getting rid of too great a portion of morality and feeling . . And, in another respect, I accord with my Sister's old-fashioned notions, that he ought to have some ancestors who aspires to the heiress of an ancient family. Therefore, as this conversation has been something in the parliamentary style, I will, with your leave, close it in that way, by proposing an adjournment on this question *sine die.* And so I have the honor to wish you a very good evening. . . [*Aside.*] No proficient in the new school could have managed this affair more adroitly. [*Exit.*

FLINTLY. This conduct, Madam, of your brother is down right affrontery, and as a man of honor, I can't overlook it.

MRS. F. OPTIME. My brother, to be sure, has been somewhat unceremonious in his expressions, but you must make it first appear, Mr. Flintly, that you

are a Gentleman, before I can second your interest. Unless you can produce your certificate from the Heralds, I must consider the negociation as entirely broken off... Your humble servant, Mr. Flintly.

[*Exit.*

FLINTLY. In the name of all the demons of disappointment, am I at last gulled by a brainless dotard, and a precise ridiculous piece of maiden antiquity!.. However, I have yet Sir Reginald in my power, and if these old fools won't conduct my bark into the port of wealth, I'll take care that he shall be my pilot to that desired haven. [*Exit.*

Act the Fourth.

SCENE I.

A parlour in the Parsonage-House of Mr. Temple.

Enter MR. TEMPLE *and* HORACE.

TEMPLE. No, Horace, I can't acknowledge the force of what you say. 'Twas wrong, believe me, to make this attack upon Sir Reginald, on mere presumptive grounds. You must therefore apologize for this conduct, since a good man bears a contumely worse than an injury.

HORACE. But, my dear Sir, what will you say if I should plead this in further vindication of my behaviour . . That Sir Reginald had certain intelligence of the regiment in which he procured Edgar's commission being under immediate orders for India.

TEMPLE. Can this be possible!

HORACE. As possible, as it is true. This letter from my Agent, will confirm the fact.

TEMPLE. [*Takes the letter and reads it.*] How have I been deceived in Sir Reginald. His early youth promised much, and I have ever since taken him to be One whose most private thoughts might challenge calumny itself. Yet shall I confess to you, that the discovery of his baseness afflicts me not half so much as the dreadful suspicion which

occasionally comes across my mind, that Edgar has yielded himself up by degrees to the worst excesses of dissipation, till he has at last been brought to look with apathy upon all those connexions which ought to be most dear to him.. Else why this inexplicable silence?

HORACE. This is to wrong your son, as much as Sir Reginald has wronged yourself.

TEMPLE. Pray Heaven it may. But the dark mysterious hints thrown out to me by Mr. Flintly, with whom Edgar lived in habits of intimacy previously to his expedition to Ally Ghur, and that gentleman's evident reluctance to enter into any detail of these irregularities, leave my mind a prey to the most gloomy forebodings.

HORACE. On my life, this Flintly is some tool of Sir Reginald.. Away then with these gloomy forebodings, and remember, Sir, how often you have told me that virtue is not a mushroom which springs up of itself in a night and may be plucked up in an instant, but is a plant of gradual and hardy growth, and not to be rooted out by any storms or tempests of the world. Depend upon it, Edgar has not so disgraced your lessons as to bend to every gale of temptation that may assail him.

TEMPLE. All his deeds had once a just correspondence with his professions. His heart was like

your own, transparent, where every one may see what is passing within it. Yet had he not turned aside to that road which leads to folly and to vice, to you he would have made himself poor of secrets; left not a thing untold which he had said or done. But neither friend, nor father, nor Ellen has he ever once addressed. The news however of a ship of war from India arriving in the Hamoaze will, in all probability, be the means of relieving my mind from those doubts and despondencies which ever mingle themselves with affliction.

Enter Servant.

SERVANT. [*Speaking to Mr. Temple.*] Sir, a gentleman wants to see you.

TEMPLE. What is his name?

SERVANT. He did not tell me, Sir. But if he had not spoken English, I should have thought, Sir, from his looks and dress, he belonged to those foreigners who passed through our village last week.

TEMPLE. Shew this stranger in.

SERVANT. He is here, Sir. [*Exit Servant.*

Enter EDGAR.

TEMPLE. Can this be! Dare I believe my senses! Yes . . it is my long-lost Edgar! . . All-merciful God, who canst in a moment lift up mortality from the

deepest sorrow to unutterable joy, accept my fervent thanks! [*Embracing Edgar, and they weeping on each other's necks.*

EDGAR. My ever honoured Parent, and most valued friend, this is a happiness which I have long despaired of tasting.

TEMPLE. Oh welcome to me, as an only son can be to a fond doating Parent.

HORACE. And to me, as day after a night of storm.

TEMPLE. But now, my Edgar, I'm all impatience to hear your story.

EDGAR. The outline of it may be soon given, the details we will reserve for another time. Not long after I had thrown off my chains at Ally Ghur, chance brought me where there was a homeward-bound ship, in which I got my passage. And scarcely had I stept on English ground, when I was accosted by our old friend Brown. By his kindness I was supplied with money, which enabled me to cross the country from Plymouth, and so to reach the Parsonage before you could receive any other account of my landing.

Enter Servant.

SERVANT. [*Speaking to Horace.*] Sir, Captain Belton to call upon you.

HORACE. [*Aside.*] He comes most opportunely. I shall now escape a scene, which above every thing I could wish to avoid... Tell Captain Belton I'll wait upon him directly.

SERVANT. Yes, Sir. [*Exit.*

HORACE. I shall now leave you, Edgar, as my presence can well be spared. [*Exit.*

EDGAR. Now, my father, let me entreat you to ease my troubled heart at once about my Ellen.. By the many questions I put to Brown I could only gather from him, that her attachment to me was, if possible, stronger than ever, but that you would tell the rest.

TEMPLE. Would I could speak words of comfort to you here. Alas, my son, I have a tale to tell which will require all your strength to bear the shock.... Hardly had Ellen recovered your unlooked-for departure, when the news came to Sir Reginald that you were dead. This was too much for her.. From that period, one vast tide of melancholy poured upon her, till at last.....

EDGAR. I'll know no more.. You need not expatiate.. My fancy catches more than you can describe, and, at a single view, I see her bereft at once of happiness and reason. Now am I wretched, past all relief.

TEMPLE. Thus to despair, my Edgar, is to ante-

date the miseries that are before us. Rather strive to think that there is a Father in nature who can relieve all the sufferings of the human heart, and who permits the affliction of the innocent, only to visit them afterwards with greater joy.

Edgar. Oh, that I could bring my mind to this pious state of confidence!.. But your words, my father, are only such a cordial as recalls the spirits of wretches half dead, to lengthen out their torture and make the sense of death more painful.. Come however what will, I'll instantly see my Ellen. But ah, how altered shall I behold that form, since we parted.. Those eyes, from which her soul beamed forth in every look, now vacant, changeless.. that cheek, which glowed with the bloom of health, pale and shrunk.. that hand, which I have pressed so often with rapturous delight, cold as the touch of death, and feverish with passions fierce or uncontrolable.. and oh, more than all, that mind, once so fraught with intelligence, now quite overclouded, and in dim eclipse. Was it to witness such a desolating storm of all that's good and lovely, I escaped dungeons, chains, and burning climes?.. Better had I perished in my first years, or nobly fallen contending in the battles of my country.... If I reflect much longer on my desperate fate, my brain like her's will grow distracted.... Eternal

Justice, how have I sinned, to have so much called down thy vengeance?

TEMPLE. My son, my dearest son, remember that to feel as you ought on this dire calamity, is to feel as becomes a Christian, who is forbidden to murmur at the will of Providence, but at the same time encouraged to hope that the prayer for assistance will ever be heard. Let me conduct you then to your chamber, and, when you are more master of your feelings, I'll see you on your way to Ellen, for there is something tells me, beyond all doubtful conjectures, that this interview will produce a happy alteration in her malady. No, no.. the same Providence which has hitherto stretched out it's arm to preserve you will not abandon you when most you need it's help.

EDGAR. I'll try to believe so, my best of Fathers. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A dressing-room in Mr. Optime's house.

Enter TRANSIT.

TRANSIT. Confound that fellow Strange! for of a certainty he seems born to mar my prospects with Lady Georgina. I wonder what she can see in him

to be so fond of his company. There would be some reason for her liking him, had he ever written any thing, as I have done, for time to glory in... I begin to suspect that one great cause of an Author's failure of success as a lover is the dread which women feel of our superior intellects.. This at least is certain, learned Ladies never get married.. even we Authors are afraid to choose them for our better halves.... Well, Twist, have you seen her Ladyship's woman?

Enter TWIST.

TWIST. Yes, Sir.

TRANSIT. Well, and what's the news?

TWIST. The very news, Sir, you wish. My Lady is just gone alone to the Chinese Island, and in such charming spirits as she was never seen in before.

TRANSIT. Enough.... Now, Phœbus, inspire thy votary with eloquence to touch the icy heart of Georgina! [*Exit.*

TWIST. If you had my person and address, your wishes would be gratified at once. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

A small Chinese Island in the front, and a bridge in the back ground.

Enter LADY GEORGINA.

LADY GEORGINA. What heartfelt joy sparkled in Horace's eyes, when he last accosted me; and how delicate was the warmth of his expressions as we returned from the Abbey. If I remember rightly, I got into such a compassionate mood on parting, that I promised to meet him at this place to hear a secret which my tell-tale eyes and faltering voice too plainly, I am afraid, confessed was my wish to have disclosed. Hush.. he comes.. I must pretend not to see him, lest he should perceive the flutter into which his presence throws me.. How different would be my sensations had Transit requested this meeting. [*She steps some paces back, and busies herself in gathering flowers.*

Enter TRANSIT *in haste, pauses a moment, and looks at Lady Georgina.*

TRANSIT. There she stands.. What an elegant creature it is!.. But I have no time to lose in dumb admiration, as such another opportunity may not again occur. [*Advances towards her.*] Fly not, frown not, fair paragon of excellence, while you hear the language of an enamoured heart.

Lady Georgina. [*Turning round.*] Was there ever such a disappointment! [*aside.*] To make the climax of your rhapsody complete, Mr. Transit, you had better call me queen or goddess, and vow that no constellation in the Heaven outshines me.

Transit. 'Tis not rhapsody, 'tis real unfeigned love which dictates these expressions . . I now court those bonds as blessings, which, till I knew you, I looked upon as galling fetters.

Lady Georgina. So then, because I preferred your company to that of Mr. Optime and his Sister, and occasionally permitted you to dangle by my side for the want of a more agreeable Beau, you have chosen to take it into your wise head that I'm desperately in love with you. Really, Mr. Transit, you learned gentlemen often commit monstrous mistakes.

Transit. Nay, now I am sure this reserve, this coyness is affected . . Thus let me enforce my suit.

[*Kneels and kisses her hand. Horace at that moment appears on the bridge, but retires almost immediately in great agitation.*

Lady Georgina. [*Catches a glimpse of Horace, and snatches her hand away angrily from Transit.*] I wonder, Sir, at your presumption! . . Let me tell you, Mr. Transit, that such another forgetfulness will not be pardoned. . . . . [*Aside.*] Oh, my unlucky

stars! The man whom I could wish to have seen in this situation must now be persuaded that this fopling has an interest in my heart.

TRANSIT. [*Aside.*] Egad, I must here try a *ruse de guerre,* to hide my mortification. *Turns round to Lady Georgina, and bursts into a loud laugh*].. Ha, ha, ha... And so you thought I was in earnest all this while, and that I did not perceive Strange on the bridge, when I so romantically popped down on my knee to you?.. Ha, ha, ha.. Why, I must have played my part to perfection, to impose upon one so adroit in the art of Love. Ha, ha, ha.... I think I I am even with him now, Lady Georgina, for his abuse of my book.

LADY GEORGINA. [*Haughtily.*] I desire, Sir, that for the future you will abstain from making me the medium of your pitiful retaliation upon that gentleman.

TRANSIT. Nay, nay, there's no reason to be so fretted about a trifle. I durst say now, the bird will soon be glad to return to his cage.. Only sing the words, "Come little foolish fluttering thing," and he'll obey his mistress's call directly.. What, you are ashamed to follow my advice.. well, well, I'll take compassion upon you, and seek him out myself; for really you look *triste* enough to make even a broker charitable. [*Going.*

Lady Georgina. [*Earnestly.*] I beg..I insist, Sir, that you will not interfere where your interference is perfectly unnecessary.

Transit. Yes, yes, I'm too good an actor not to understand all this..I mean of too sympathizing a nature long to separate faithful lovers, when they are on the point of exchanging hearts with each other. Now then is your opportunity; for a woman may as well think to secure her lover when her beauty's gone, as a man his friend when his estate is spent.....[*Aside.*] I think by this manœuvre I have escaped the double mortification of attempting a foolish thing, and not succeeding in it..This it is now to have some wit in our anger. [*Exit.*

Lady Georgina. I declare that the unexpected turn which this coxcomb has given to my refusal of him is ten times more annoying than his silly professions of attachment.

Enter Clara Optime *in haste.*

Clara. Oh, Georgina, I come to you in the greatest distress imaginable..I'm reduced to a dilemma in which it is scarcely possible to reconcile my feelings with my duty.

Lady Georgina. Why, what's the matter?

Clara. My father seems resolved I shall not

have Belton, and I seem no less resolved to have him. How peculiarly embarrassing is my situation!

Lady Georgina. [*In a thoughtful mood.*] And so is mine. That he should come at so unlooked and unwished for a moment!

Clara. Come!.. whom do you mean? I thought a visit from Mr. Strange was at no time unwelcome. You give me however a strong proof of affection.

Lady Georgina. How, my dear? For I can't well perceive in what manner my disappointment is to be construed into a proof of affection for you.

Clara. Why didn't you understand I was about to speak of Belton? Your not wishing Mr. Strange to interrupt our conversation ought surely to be regarded by me as a mark of the sincerest friendship.

Lady Georgina. Oh, we are at cross purposes, I perceive.... No, you quite mistake the cause of my uneasiness. I was ruminating on the disappointment of receiving a declaration from one person, when I expected it from another; and it was that which led me to make such inconsistent answers. You comprehend me now?

Clara. Yes, yes; you are quite intelligible.. And I must add, that your explanation is as little like a compliment as any thing I ever heard in my life.. But here is some one coming.

Enter HORACE.

HORACE. Shall I be an intruder if I join your walk?

CLARA. Bless me, Mr. Strange, why do you ask such a question? You never can intrude.

HORACE. Of your politeness, Miss Optime, I'm truly sensible.. But the Lady with you may not be of the same opinion.

CLARA. Indeed.. And pray why should she not? Though, upon second thoughts, you may be right, and I also may be an intruder; for she has been in the oddest humour possible ever since Transit left her.

HORACE. Don't you know, Miss Optime, it is the peculiar characteristic of the fine Lady never to be two days in the same humour?

LADY GEORGINA. Right, our liberty's gone, our charter's reversed, if we are made servants to consistency. But I hate the word fine Lady in the country.. It is fit only to proceed from the mouth of a *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, and not from one who piques himself on the nice choice of his epithets.. Yet pray go on amusing yourselves at my expence. Come, Sir, another fanciful effusion.. Though before you run to any great lengths in this pleasing vein, give me leave to ask you, if inattention to his en-

gagements is not to be placed in the catalogue of the fine Gentleman's characteristics?

Horace. No more than making an appointment with one person and keeping it with another is to act with kindness, courtesy, or propriety.

Clara. Well, good folks, I suppose you perfectly understand each other, though all this to me is hieroglyphics.. My only guess can be, that you have been quarrelling with each other; and, after a little more pouting, I suppose the eclaircissement will take place.

Lady Georgina. Oh, you forget, child. Love has gall in it as well as honey, and so compounded, that whoever will taste the sweets must likewise partake of the bitters. Now, Mr. Strange, my dear, seems determined to have his full share of the latter; as he will consider against all probability that to be designed which was purely accidental.

Horace. But how does your Ladyship account for the tender adoration of Mr. Transit? Was his kneeling accidental?

Lady Georgina. Women, I believe, Sir, you'll find are like the Arts, open to all, and unprized, if unsought after. And like them too we have our favorites.. But to suppose Mr. Transit is my favorite, is to pay a compliment to my susceptibility at the

expence of my understanding that I must beg leave to decline.

HORACE. Take not this then, dearest Lady Georgina, for a compliment, when I say, that all which my heart beats for beneath the Sun, 'tis yours to give.

LADY GEORGINA. I am afraid I should here make a very silly reply, if I were not prevented by the timely approach of Mrs. Flaminia Optime.

Enter MRS. FLAMINIA OPTIME *in haste.*

LADY GEORGINA. [*Advances towards her.*] You seem a little discomposed, my dear Madam.

MRS. F. OPTIME. Not a little, Lady Georgina.. I have missed my beautiful Muscovy ducks, which I value in the same degree as my brother does his carp and lampreys.

HORACE. What, I suppose, Ma'am, the honest folks make somewhat free with your poultry during the assize and race weeks.

MRS. F. OPTIME. Free enough, on my conscience. Why, do you know, Sir, that my poultry-yard and fish-pond were tithed one night, and put before my brother the next day when he dined with the Judge. Mr. Optime however contrived at last to find out the rogues.

HORACE. And pray what did he do with them?

MRS. F. OPTIME. Oh, he took a very singular,

but perhaps necessary course: He forgave them, as his property had been so well disposed of, and now employs them to protect his rights whenever these guardians of the laws come down among us.. But as I have not long missed my Muscovies, let us divide in parties round the Island in search of them, and meet again at the bridge... Clara, we'll take this direction. [*Exeunt.*

HORACE. [*Aside.*] A lucky proposition this for me... Will you venture, Lady Georgina, to commit yourself to my protection?

LADY GEORGINA. How can I refuse, when even Mrs. Flaminia Optime approves it? [*Exeunt.*

Act the Fifth.

SCENE I.

Ellen's Dressing-room.

Enter LADY CASTLEWYN *and* EDGAR.

LADY CASTLEWYN. The surprise of your return, Edgar, is a happiness which I so little expected to receive, that I scarcely know how to express it. Sir Reginald too, I need not add, will share, when he returns home, in the same feeling.

EDGAR. Ah, my dear Madam, my past sufferings would have appeared as a dream, if my poor Ellen had only.....

LADY CASTLEWYN. Your father then has told you her sad story.

EDGAR. Yes, he has shewn me that I am heir to a wretchedness which will not quit me in this life.

LADY CASTLEWYN. Let us not think that either. For who can tell what a wonderful effect the sight of you may produce upon my Sister? Who can say but she may regain her reason as suddenly as she lost it?

EDGAR. Suddenly did you say?

LADY CASTLEWYN. Yes..Many, as you may suppose, were the tears she shed after your departure: but ever since intelligence was brought that

you were no more, images the most wild and incoherent have possessed her mind.

EDGAR. How I long but dread to hear her voice. May I not soon behold her?

LADY CASTLEWYN. You shall; yet let me caution you to command your feelings.. the very crisis of her disorder hangs upon this interview.... I hear footsteps.... 'Tis she. Look, yonder Ellen comes. Now collect yourself.

[*Edgar retires to the side of the room. Ellen enters in haste, followed by her servant, and looking round earnestly, as if in search of something.*

ELLEN. Can no one tell me where my treasure is hid?

EDGAR. Oh, horror, horror!.. Of all the mournful sights these eyes have witnessed, none ever rent my heart like this.

LADY CASTLEWYN. I conjure you to remember that the future color of your life.. your all.. depends upon this eventful hour. Try then to be composed, and see what effect your voice will produce upon her.

EDGAR. Tears, ye choke my utterance. What can I say?.... Will not Ellen smile upon her forlorn Adventurer?

ELLEN. [*Starts back much agitated.*] That sound again! Oh, it came o'er my ear like the sweet warble

of the lute. Never did but one voice send forth such music.. it was like the dear thought of happiness once possessed, pleasant and sad to the soul. Oh, speak to my misery, tell me what thou art.

EDGAR. Can Ellen have forgot her Edgar?

ELLEN. Bear record, thou spirit of truth, that he is enshrined here. [*Placing her hand upon her heart.*] And never shall the dear remembrance fade away while aught of life remains..... Forget my Edgar!.... No, he will ever be present to my eyes, his words will ever echo in my ears. Ours was not like earthly love.

LADY CASTLEWYN. Look up then, my Sister.. Your Edgar comes through toils and perils to dispel your sorrows.

ELLEN. Vain words! Well I know that the lord of my bosom's love is slain.... I see now his last convulsive pangs, and catch his dying groans, and hear him whisper he'll not be happy till I am with him... Oh, my Sister, for ever silent is the heart that gave itself to me.. would mine were as still.

EDGAR. Oh God, oh God, I cannot bear this struggle longer.. Say, rather, thou drooping loveliness, that Edgar is sent to speak peace and comfort to thy distracted thoughts.

LADY CASTLEWYN. Raise your eyes, my Ellen, and turn them to him who now stands before you.

ELLEN. I dare not, lest the delightful illusion which now plays around my senses should vanish.

EDGAR. 'Tis no illusion.. Behold, dearest sufferer, thy Edgar lives, speaks, and kneels at thy feet.

ELLEN. [*Looking up towards Edgar, while her eyes gaze on him with earnestness and delight.*] Art thou the phantom of a blessed dream!.. No, it is he!.. Almighty God..'tis he himself.... Yes..it is my Edgar!

[*She rushes forward to his extended arms, but before she reaches them she stops, and with a wild shriek falls back into her attendant's arm.*

EDGAR. Father of Mercies! Is it thy righteous will to make me her murderer?

LADY CASTLEWYN. Heaven has not so decreed it.. See, she breathes again.. Help me to support her to her chamber.

[*Exeunt. Ellen leaning upon the shoulder of Edgar: Lady Castlewyn and Servant following.*

SCENE II.

A Wood.

Enter HORACE *and* CAPTAIN BELTON.

HORACE. We are on the ground first.. If I do not greatly mistake, the man I have to deal with comes to this business with a heavy heart.. It would be somewhat lightened, if he knew of the arrival of Edgar, but that satisfaction is denied him, as he meets us, you say, from Worcester.

CAPT. BELTON. So I understood from Flintly.. Did you not tell me that if Miss De Rivers dies unmarried, Sir Reginald, or, what is the same, his Wife, inherits her fortune?

HORACE. Yes, the two Sisters were coheiresses; and Sir Reginald and Mr. Temple guardians to them both.. But see, here comes the Baronet and Mr. Flintly.

Enter SIR REGINALD *and* FLINTLY.

FLINTLY. Gentlemen, your most obedient.

SIR REGINALD. I hope we are punctual to our engagement.

FLINTLY. [*Stepping forward to Capt. Belton.*] I presume, Sir, you are here as the friend of Mr. Strange?

Capt. Belton. That question, Sir, I think need scarcely have been asked, after what has passed between us.

Flintly. On the part of Sir Reginald, I must declare that this business cannot be brought to an accommodation without the most ample apology from Mr. Strange for the language he employed towards him at Mr. Optime's table. Thefts, Sir, may be restored, and wounds may be healed; but for an injured reputation there is no remedy, except.....

Capt. Belton. I beg pardon, Mr. Flintly, for interrupting you, but I must remind you that this is not the place for declamation.

Horace. [*Aside to Capt. Belton.*] If you don't mean to tire my patience, pray finish directly with this swaggerer, who thinks to carry his point by big words.

Flintly. Perhaps, Captain Belton, your friend may have something to say which will wind up this affair more to your satisfaction.

Horace. A great deal of time may be saved, if you will allow me to shew Sir Reginald the hinge upon which this business turns.

Flintly. Then, Sir, you have my permission.

Horace. The charge I have to make against you, Sir Reginald, is of a plain, but heavy nature, and if it can be proved untrue, I shall deem no repa-

ration too great for the licence of my tongue. Briefly, Sir Reginald, I assert, that you inveigled Edgar Temple into a regiment which you had private intimation was destined to immediate service in the East Indies: And, by this perfidious act, you bereft Ellen De Rivers of her reason, and plunged the father of my friend into that affliction which has nearly brought him to the grave. If in this I have wronged you.....

Sir Reginald. Sir, you have wronged me at least in supposing that I have brought with me here any other thought but of revenge. Take your ground, Sir, and learn only this.. what I have dared to do I have the spirit to defend. [*Aside.*] Better to die at once, than bear this load of infamy.

Flintly. Stop, we are interrupted, some one has just leaped the stile.

Enter Edgar *in haste.*

Sir Reginald. Do I behold?.. Amazement!.. Edgar here!

Edgar. Is it thus I meet my friends?

Sir Reginald. Even in this situation, your presence so unexpected, so impossible to thought, fills me with such a tumult of delight, that I can scarcely articulate it..Yet there is one..Oh Ellen! how doubly wretched is now thy fate.

EDGAR. Her fate..Think not you dream, Sir Reginald, when you are told that Ellen is recovered. Well may you cast upon me that look of doubt.. But it is no dream..Ellen, I repeat, is recovered, and Lady Castlewyn impatient to communicate to you the particulars.

SIR REGINALD. In the joy of this blessed moment, I will bury all the griefs of the past... [*Aside.*] For the injuries I have done are no longer aggravated by the reflection that they cannot be repaired.

HORACE. Sir Reginald, with your leave, we will settle at another time the object of our meeting.

SIR REGINALD. I close with your proposal.

CAPT. BELTON. Come, Horace, I am glad to see this business in a train of being amicably adjusted; for, sacred as Honour is, it is ever best preserved without bloodshed. [*Exeunt.*

SIR REGINALD. [*Apart to Edgar.*] I have much to unfold to your private ear..But I will not now detain you from your father, further than to express a wish of seeing you again as soon as possible.

EDGAR. Fear not my delay. [*Exit.*

SIR REGINALD. These extraordinary occurrences, Flintly, totally unfit me for conversation of any sort. When I am more at ease I shall be glad of your company. [*Exit.*

FLINTLY. This unlooked-for return of Edgar,

and dawning of repentance in Sir Reginald leave me only one desperate expedient to repair my broken fortunes, and, if that fail, I'm sunk as low in ignominy as the friends of justice and virtue could wish.

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

A Library in Sir Reginald Castlewyn's House.

Enter LADY CASTLEWYN.

LADY CASTLEWYN. Not yet returned.. and absent from home ever since he parted from me to visit Mr. Optime!.. His note says he was suddenly called to Worcester to meet his Lawyer upon important business. This explanation ought perhaps in reason to take away from me all ground of disturbance. But the strange variations I have of late observed in him give me constant alarm, and some cause to suspect that other griefs, besides those for our dear lost children and for poor Ellen, prey upon his mind, and cut at his heart-strings. Ah, Sir Reginald, why will you not permit me to know your sorrows, for you little think I suffer more by not partaking of them.

Enter Servant.

SERVANT. Madam, Sir Reginald has just come into the Hall, and is enquiring after your Ladyship.

LADY CASTLEWYN. Haste then, William, to inform him I am in the Library.

SERVANT. Madam, my Master is here.

[*Exit Servant.*

Enter SIR REGINALD.

LADY CASTLEWYN. Joy, joy, joy, my dearest Sir Reginald.

SIR REGINALD. In those words, my love, I read the return of Edgar, and the recovery of Ellen. But tell me some particulars of the last blessed event; for though I had the assurance from Edgar himself of her recovery, yet so marvellous does it still appear to me, that I want to have it confirmed by your own lips.

LADY CASTLEWYN. Hardly could I have ventured on the step which has produced this quick restoration, if I had not been often told by Dr. Seymour, that the sight of Edgar was the most likely of all means to effect it. Accordingly, I brought him to her apartment. His voice instantly made an impression, and when she recognized his person, she fell into a swoon, from which she awoke with her intel-

lects evidently returned. She is now quiet and composed, and the Doctor, who most fortunately came soon after this happy change, has assured me of her permanent recovery.

Sir Reginald. These indeed are tidings that convey to my heart a happines to which it has long been a stranger. But retire, my dearest wife, and prepare her for a visit from Edgar, whom I expect every moment here.

Lady Castlewyn. And for your visit also, Sir Reginald, since she has enquired after you with all imaginable affection. [*Exit Lady Castlewyn.*

Sir Reginald. Sweet injured excellence!.... Enquire after me..me..the cruel author of all your sufferings! Oh..how doubly bitter is the agony of self-reproach, when it is thus punished!.. Yet I will make this atonement to virtue, that Edgar shall know my extremest guilt, although I must be ever after the object of his execration..But he comes.

Enter Edgar.

Sir Reginald. You look disturbed.

Edgar. And not without some cause..On passing through the wood which adjoins your house, I was fired at. Luckily, my foot at that instant struck against a tree; I fell, and escaped being shot.

SIR REGINALD. The county is overrun with poachers.

EDGAR. Poachers use only shot for their purposes; but my marksman was supplied with better materials for his game... I heard the ball distinctly whistle over my head as I lay on the ground; yet no one approached me, nor could I discover into what path he turned, as the noise of the waterfall prevented me from hearing any footsteps.

SIR REGINALD. This circumstance is not more alarming than unaccountable.. But now I have a most painful and humiliating communication to make.

EDGAR. And at your leisure, Sir Reginald, I have to acquaint you with a few details of one whom you too much honor by admitting to your closest intimacy.

SIR REGINALD. [*Aside.*] 'Tis as I thought.. he suspects Flintly.

Enter Servant.

SERVANT. Mr. Flintly, Sir Reginald, to wait upon you. [*Exit.*

Enter FLINTLY.

SIR REGINALD. [*Aside.*] So the hour of retribution is at last come. [*Flintly endeavours to look*

unconcerned, but cannot cover his agitation in the presence of Edgar.] What ails you, Mr. Flintly, are you unwell?

Flintly. A film came across my eyes as I entered the room .. I'm subject to it whenever I walk fast .. It is gone..... [*Aside.*] Now courage, my heart..... [*Turning to Edgar.*] I'm rejoiced, Temple, to bid you welcome again to your native land. You must have suffered much since last we parted.

Edgar. Yes, a long imprisonment, and repeated vicissitudes of heat and cold will affect the stoutest constitutions: but for the greatest of my sufferings, I'm indebted to the man who calls himself my friend.

Flintly. Indeed! .. Tell me his name, that I may shun him as I would a pestilence.

Edgar. Flintly .... Within this hour I have learned the uses to which you have turned my friendship. Say, what could tempt you thus to abuse it?

Flintly. [*After a pause.*] Poverty has undone the proudest virtue. And there is he whose gold has made me what I am.

Edgar. [*Turning to Sir Reginald.*] Surely I am in some frightful dream!

Sir Reginald. It is, Edgar, with shame and contrition that I acknowledge his charge to be true. Yet, Heaven be praised, there is time enough to repair .....

Flintly. What? Your own reputation, or the injuries you have done him? If the latter, who sent him to India? If the former, what was the incentive?

Edgar. This then explains the reason why those letters which I committed to your care when you sailed for England never reached the persons to whom they were addressed.

Sir Reginald. [*Eagerly.*] What letters? But I'm confounded every way. Why, he painted you to me as one so led away by an insatiable appetite for dissipation and extravagance, as to have neither time nor inclination to bestow a thought upon your dearest connexions, while, to remove all doubt of the truth of what he said, he extorted from me a large sum, alleged to have been advanced by him for the express purpose of enabling you to join the expedition againt Ally Ghur.

Edgar. Matchless villain!.. Where are the thousand pagodas, gathered, I confess, from the gaming table, which I had visited for the first and only time in my life in the midst of feelings and irritation brought on by your suppression of my letters? Confess, you who administer excitements to gaming.. you who love but to seduce the innocent, betray the unwary, and initiate the thoughtless in the ways of guilt, whether, resolved to benefit myself with no

part of my ill-gotten wealth, I did not commission you to deliver it into my father's hands for charitable purposes. Answer then, satisfactorily if you can, why that money was not so delivered.

FLINTLY. For this very good reason, that I never received it.

EDGAR. Never received it?.. Good Heaven, grant me patience, lest my overboiling rage should do a deed which should debase me down to this disgrace of manhood!

FLINTLY. Where are your proofs, your witnesses of the fact?

EDGAR. So, you would wish to have it believed that nothing can be true but what is proved in a court of justice. Look at this memorandum, [*taking a paper from his pocket-book.*] which, in the confused number of your misdeeds, providentially seems not to have been remembered, attesting in your own hand-writing the truth of my allegation.. What subterfuge will now remain?

FLINTLY. [*Covering his face with his hands, and remaining some time without speaking.*] None.. I am a villain, and if you taunt me with what is past, I'll give you no other answer.. I detained the letters.. I stole the locket from Miss De Rivers.. I attempted your life.. and, in one short word, my villainy is beyond example.

Edgar. It is enough; your pardon be your punishment. The money you have withheld is your's; but on condition that you abandon this country for ever.

Flintly. Be it so. [*Exit.*

Sir Reginald. Now earth bears not a more self-condemned wretch than I . . O Edgar, much as you have learned from your father and Mr. Strange, offended virtue yet requires you should know that my conduct is tinged with the deepest die of criminality and guilt.

Edgar. Take courage, Sir; I have not the temper to feel pleasure in unforgiveness.

Sir Reginald. It cannot be unknown to you, that, by the Will of Ellen's father, if either of the Sisters died without issue her share of the property was to devolve to the other . . That Will undid me. It silenced all my honorable and generous feelings . . for I once had them, Edgar . . It put me on the detestable contrivance of separating you and Ellen . . And oh, shame on my own vile nature, it turned me into so complete a barbarian, as to tell your Ellen, without even a moment's preparation, that her Edgar was dead . . Now, don't you think Nature must abhor and drive me out of the commerce and society of my fellow-creatures? Speak, can you stretch forth the hand of forgiveness?

EDGAR. To savages we should leave, Sir Reginald, the savage luxury of returning evil for evil, cruelty for cruelty; but indulgence to others, with severity to himself, is, after all, the truest characteristic of a Christian. I'll shew you that I am one not in name only, but in practice . . There's my hand, and with it receive the assurance that your confession shall never escape these lips. Indeed, if I in the least understand your character, the remembrance of what you have done must be punishment sufficient, did I wish for the most ample vengeance.

SIR REGINALD. It is indeed. Excellent young man! I scarcely know how to sustain the generosity that thus forgives me, when scorn and execration were all I dared to expect. Blessed then with the sight of Ellen's recovery, and your union, I shall no longer dread to look upon her; while my repentance may, I hope, in time bring with it a consolation more valuable than all the enjoyments of former days.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

A Saloon in Sir Reginald Castlewyn's House.

Enter ELLEN *and* LADY CASTLEWYN, *speaking as they enter.*

ELLEN. Have you any more afflictions to disclose? Tell me them all, Sister, while nature fits me

to receive a check to the happiness which is in store for me. Lost and ever dear children, little did I think when last I saw them, that they would have dropped off like violets full of the morning dew.. But where is the partner of your sorrows, where is Sir Reginald? After I have seen him, and shed some tears on the bosom of the best of monitors, my Edgar's father, I shall perhaps be able to receive the rest of my friends.

LADY CASTLEWYN. Look, my Ellen, here comes your Edgar.

Enter EDGAR.

EDGAR. [*Embracing Ellen.*] Once more I clasp my Ellen to my heart.. Tears different far from those which mourners shed bedew thy cheeks and mine.. Oh, dearest object of my chosen affection, how shall I repay thy matchless constancy, tenderness, and love.

ELLEN. In that embrace they are more than all repaid.

Enter SIR REGINALD.

SIR REGINALD. Innocence, like your's, my Ellen, can form no conception of the sensations which pain yet delight me, as I thus enfold you in my arms..

But from this day forward, your joy shall be my felicity.

Enter MR. TEMPLE.

TEMPLE. Oh, ectasy and transport, to see life once more a blessing to you.

ELLEN. Let my tears thank you.. words are inadequate to the expression of my feelings.

EDGAR. See too, my Ellen, here are those whose looks bespeak the real joy with which they come to offer you their congratulations.

Enter MR. *and* MRS. F. OPTIME, LADY GEORGINA, CLARA, CAPT. BELTON, STRANGE, *and* TRANSIT.

OPTIME. Ay, this appears like Sir Reginald's house again; for in every part of it I meet with gladsome faces. [*Advancing to Ellen.*] My dear young Lady, suffer an old friend to take you by the hand, and to wish you, in the name of us all, a long career of health and happiness. Say, Horace, does not all this make you wish to ask yonder Lady the lover's last necessary question?

HORACE. So much, that I must request your influence with her, [*bows and comes to Lady Georgina.*] to induce her acceptance of my hand, my heart.

LADY GEORGINA. Oh, there is a difficulty to be overcome, greater than you can easily imagine, be-

fore that's answered. [*Looking archly at Miss Optime.*] In a thoughtless moment, for so I now must deem it, I made a vow I would never marry while a dear friend of mine remained a Spinster.

Horace. Nay, I entreat you, do not choose this moment to trifle with my passion.

Lady Georgina. [*With an affected hesitation.*] Why, to be sure, there is a way of removing this difficulty, but I doubt much if you'd like to try it.

Horace. If it be within the verge of possibility, doubt not of my attempting it.

Optime. Well said, Strange; and I promise you my aid, if wanted.

Lady Georgina. Why, Horace, you must either poison Miss Optime, or prevail on her father to release me from my singular, I had almost said mortifying predicament, by consenting to her union with Captain Belton.

Optime. These rash vows are mighty silly things. What, for instance, would have been your embarrassment, if I had vowed, out of compliment to my Sister's love of precedence, not to marry my daughter till I had first got Her off my hands.

Clara. [*Aside to Lady Georgina.*] There, Georgina, we don't allow precedence.

Transit. Oh, Sir, in that case, I should have stepped forth as a canditate for your Sister's favor.

But you know, Lady Georgina, I'm indissolubly wedded to the Muses.

Lady Georgina. Give my compliments to the Ladies, and tell them that the next time you and they strain out a work together, we'll all take five copies a-piece, elephant size, and so save you the trouble of a circular visit to the Booksellers . . You understand me.

Capt. Belton. Pray, Mr. Transit, what is to be the subject of your next work?

Transit. Coxcombs.

Mrs. F. Optime. Mr. Transit, a Lady upwards of forty cannot be insensible to your compliment; but you, brother, may enjoy your joke, as you have long known my preference to a life of celibacy. However, to shew you I am no enemy to Matrimony, let me request you to crown the happiness of your daughter by giving her the man of her choice.

Lady Georgina. Pray do, my dear Sir, if it be only to release me from the severity of my condition.

Optime. Your proposals, Captain, have been certainly of that honorable kind, that few would accuse me of want of prudence in accepting them; therefore, I don't think I should withhold my consent, if.....

Sir Reginald. You had a good example to follow. Let me then set you an excellent one, by pre-

senting the hand of Ellen De Rivers to him whose love, strengthened by absence and distress, and firm in distant climes, has indeed been altogether of that noble generous nature which leaves all language of praise too weak for it's desert.

TEMPLE. [*Advancing between Ellen and Edgar.*] Take my paternal blessing, dearest objects of my affection, and with it the prediction of your future happiness.

THE END.

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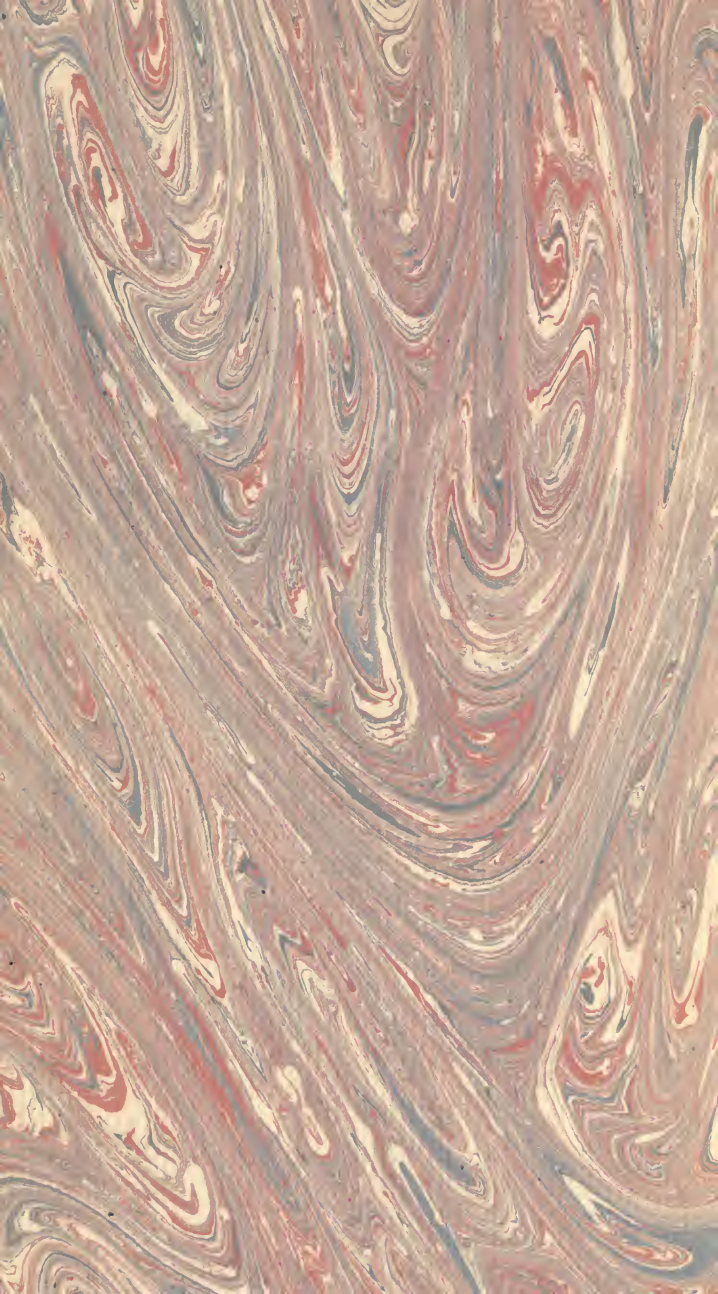
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